# Michigan Groundwater Conservation Advisory Council

## Guiding Principles

September 6, 2005

1. Michigan has an abundance of water resources, both groundwater and surface water. Certain groundwater sources can support a large amount of withdrawal without harm to other users or to the ecosystem. Other groundwater sources are more vulnerable to large withdrawals.

2. There is no overall shortage of water in the State. Currently, groundwater withdrawals in Michigan do not present a crisis.

3. Groundwater sustainability involves balancing the demands placed on the resource by the economic, social, and environmental sectors, ensuring that the needs of current and future generations are not compromised by current usage. The resource should be managed for current and future use based on well founded scientific analysis.

4. The council recognizes that conservation of our groundwater and our surface water includes both the efficient use of water and also the protection of quality.

5. Groundwater is a valuable asset, and if used efficiently, can provide the basis of a strong economy and high quality of life in Michigan. Nearly half of Michigan's population relies on groundwater for drinking water. Many others rely on groundwater for a variety of other purposes.

6. The Council has studied groundwater and withdrawals of water from groundwater sources, not surface water. However, the Council recognizes that ground and surface water are strongly interrelated and cannot be viewed as separate and distinct.

7. Michigan does not have a coordinated administrative process to manage groundwater use; such a process could minimize water use conflicts and adverse environmental impacts. Recently a groundwater dispute resolution statute was enacted to supplement Michigan common law for evaluating reasonable use.

8. Some areas of the state have been identified as sensitive to groundwater withdrawal. Current and future withdrawals in these areas require a higher degree of monitoring, scientific research, and understanding.

9. Not all groundwater withdrawals are alike, and have differing levels and types of impacts; how much water that would be withdrawn, from where (location and depth), at what frequency and time of year, and ecological conditions are all major factors that determine whether and where an impact may occur.

10. Additional monitoring of stream flows, water levels, aquatic ecosystems, and related mapping and analysis is essential to protecting groundwater resources.

11. Consistency of regulation and predictability between state and local units of government are essential to managing the resource. The state should encourage regional and multi-jurisdictional approaches to groundwater management and wellhead protection.

12. Local, voluntary problem-solving approaches for resolving groundwater disputes and withdrawal impacts are the desirable starting point for conflict resolution.

13. The Council has not prioritized water use by type of user or by purpose of use. We recognize that the amount of groundwater withdrawn from an aquifer must be sustainable.